

Visitor Services Project
Cumberland Island National Seashore
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Cumberland Island National Seashore during May 3-17, 1998. Out of 344 questionnaires distributed, visitors returned 295 questionnaires for an 86% response rate.
- This report profiles Cumberland Island NS visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Forty-eight percent of the visitors were in family groups. Fifty percent of Cumberland Island NS visitors were in groups of two; 20% were in groups of three or four. Fourteen percent of visitors were in organized tour groups. Ten percent of visitors were in school/ educational groups. Many visitors (47%) were aged 31-55 and 15% were aged 15 years or younger.
- Among Cumberland Island NS visitors, the number of international visitors was too small to provide reliable information. United States visitors were from Georgia (44%), Florida (26%), North Carolina (6%), South Carolina (4%), 31 other states and Washington, D.C.
- Many visitors (89%) were visiting Cumberland Island NS for the first time during the past year. Sixty-three percent were first time visitors in the past five years. Seventy-two percent of visitors stayed less than one day in the park. Less than one-fourth (22%) stayed two to four days.
- On this visit, common activities at Cumberland Island NS were hiking/ walking (91%), watching birds/ wildlife (83%), sightseeing (83%), visiting historic sites (77%), beachcombing (72%) and picnicking (52%). On past visits, the most common activities were hiking/ walking (36%), sightseeing (33%) and visiting historic sites (33%).
- Prior to visiting, the information sources visitors used to learn about the park included friends/ relatives (48%), previous visits (37%) and phone inquiries to the park (30%). Most visitors (88%) did not have difficulty obtaining park information. The most often listed reasons for visiting were viewing scenery/ wildlife (87%), visiting the beach (70%) and recreation opportunities (66%).
- The ferry was the most common form of transportation to reach the island (89%), followed by private boats (7%) and barges/ shuttles (4%). The most visited places in Cumberland Island NS were the Atlantic beaches (90%), Dungeness historic area (83%), Dungeness Dock (78%) and St. Marys Visitor Center (75%).
- For the use, importance and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups who responded to each question. The most used visitor services by 274 respondents were the park brochure/map (89%) and ferry (83%). According to visitors, the most important services were the ferry (98% of 220 respondents) and reservation system (92% of 120 respondents). The best quality services were assistance from employees (90% of 59 respondents) and visitor center orientation video (90% of 30 respondents).
- The most used visitor facilities by 277 respondents were restrooms (95%), trails (85%) and directional signs (81%). The most important facilities were trails (95% of 229 respondents), directional signs (93% of 218 respondents) and Sea Camp Campground (93% of 56 respondents). The best quality facilities were Sea Camp boardwalk (94% of 157 respondents), docks (92% of 184 respondents), Sea Camp Campground (89% of 56 respondents) and trails (89% of 227 respondents).
- Most visitor groups felt the current visitation limit is "about right" (82%). When asked about crowding, 61% of the visitor groups felt that the park was "not at all crowded" during their visit. Thirty percent felt it was "somewhat crowded," 7% felt it was "crowded" and 2% said it was "very crowded."
- Most visitors (91%) rated the overall quality of services in the park as "good" or "very good." Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.
